

RESOLUTION NO. 16097

A **RESOLUTION** relating to establishing the Thurston County Council on Racial Equity and Inclusion and rescinding Resolution No. 10365.

**WHEREAS**, on March 9, 2021, the Thurston County Board of County Commissioners passed Resolution No. 15995, declaring racism a crisis in Thurston County, Washington; and

**WHEREAS**, in Resolution No. 15995, The Board of County Commissioners directed the Thurston County Manager to create a county Racial Equity Action Plan by June 30, 2021, and report semi-annually on progress to the Board thereafter; and

**WHEREAS**, in Resolution No. 15995, The Board of County Commissioners direct the Thurston County Manager to develop a resolution establishing a policy advisory committee that will advise the Board on meaningful policies to advance racial equity across county government for the benefit of the entire community; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 9, 2021, the Thurston County Board of Health proclaimed racism a public health crisis affecting the residents of Thurston County; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 21, 1993, Ordinance No. 10365 was adopted, establishing the Thurston Council on Cultural Diversity and Human Rights and adding a new chapter to Title 2 of the Thurston County Code, for the purpose of promoting multi-cultural diversity and human rights education, supporting diverse cultural activities and providing a forum for interaction between diverse cultural groups; and

**WHEREAS**, Thurston County government has an essential role in changing harmful public policies and practices that perpetuate systemic racism; and

**WHEREAS**, Thurston County government will work to advance racial equity, so all lives can flourish, and will foster a culture of belonging that advances racial, social, and economic justice in services to our diverse community; and

**WHEREAS**, Thurston County government has the unique opportunity and responsibility to advance policies and practices that promote racial equity.

NOW, **THEREFORE**, be it ordained by the Board of County Commissioners of Thurston County, Washington, that

Section 1. Ordinance No. 10365 that created the Cultural Diversity and Human Rights Council is hereby rescinded.

Section 2. The Thurston County Council on Racial Equity and Inclusion is hereby created

Section 3. Purpose of Council

The purpose of the council is to advise and engage the County Commission, Board of Health, Elected and Appointed officials on matters of racial equity and inclusion within all county services and the policies, processes, and practices used to accomplish the mission of Thurston County government. The council's engagement shall include the following:



- a) Providing input to the County Commission, Board of Health, Elected and Appointed Officials based on the results of a workplace assessment, so intentional and targeted strategies can be implemented to address the current state of diversity, equity, and inclusion experienced by employees, vendors, customers, clients, and residents.
- b) Identifying barriers and recommendations to underrepresented Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) community members that prevent full participation in the access, use, and receipt of County government services and resources especially when compared to non-BIPOC residents.
- c) Identifying opportunities to increase the participation of underrepresented BIPOC community members in the development and implementation of County government ordinances, regulations, policies, and programs.
- d) Serving as a conduit for consultation and input across all levels of County government to ensure effective engagement, collaboration, and outcomes with BIPOC community members.
- e) Making recommendations on the forum, structure, and delivery of critical conversations on race and equity within the structure of county government and in the larger community.
- f) Providing input to County Commission, Board of Health, Elected and Appointed officials, county employees and volunteers to develop and implement a county Racial Equity Action Plan, including future updates and modifications, and other efforts aimed at creating a more equitable community.
- g) Serving as a facilitating forum to hear from community partners, should they choose to use the Council, about the needs and priorities of local BIPOC communities to support meaningful use and action by County government.
- h) Participating in community and educational outreach to build relationships and seek further community feedback regarding the work of the Thurston County Council on Racial Equity and Inclusion from the greater BIPOC communities.
- i) Providing input to the County Commission, Board of Health, Elected and Appointed officials to conduct a regular reoccurring community assessment to understand the current state of diversity, equity, and inclusion as experienced by County residents.
- j) Providing a forum to receive complaints that occur within Thurston County relating to unlawful discrimination based upon race, religion, color, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, familial status, honorably discharged veteran or military status, disability, or source of income, and providing recommendations to appropriate entities for suggested follow up.

#### Section 4. Council Membership, General Process and Procedures for the Council

The Council shall consist of a committee of no fewer than seven (7), and no more than fifteen (15) community members at large comprised of residents of Thurston County from marginalized populations, specifically those who identify as BIPOC. Subject to formal appointment by the Board of County Commissioners.



The Council shall initially be comprised of seven (7) community members, appointed by the Commission, who represent the diversity of Thurston County's BIPOC residents. The Council will begin increasing its members throughout the first three years, until there is a total of fifteen (15). Council members appointed by the Commission shall include BIPOC community members and community members with lived experience of institutional and systemic racism and oppression.

A majority of the general members of the council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Any action taken by a majority of those present when those present constitute a quorum, at any regular or special meeting of the council, shall be deemed and taken as the action of the council. All meetings are subject to the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA).

An accurate record shall be kept of the proceedings of all council meetings. These records shall be available to the public, and a copy thereof shall be transmitted to the Clerk of the Board County Commissioners. Council meetings shall be open to the public, both in person and virtually through the county YouTube channel.

The council shall select its own facilitator or chairperson from within its membership. The council is required to follow the Thurston County Boards and Commissions Handbook, adopted to conduct orderly course of its business and may develop more inclusive means to ensure meaningful input within council resources.

The council shall participate in annual implicit bias training, also known as unconscious bias training, or other training opportunities designed to create awareness of implicit bias and to provide tools to adjust automatic patterns of thinking and ultimately eliminate unconscious discriminatory behaviors. The council will participate in the Harvard Implicit Association Test to be aware of their own areas of biases.

Support for the equitable participation of council members will be available. Necessary expenses incurred for business associated with the council's purpose shall receive prior approval by the County Manager.

#### Section 5. Appointment and Removal of Council Members

An application process will be developed for BIPOC community members working or living in Thurston County to apply for consideration for the Thurston County Council on Racial Equity and Inclusion. The application process will be communicated to BIPOC community members in ways designed to intentionally reach BIPOC people where they live, work and gather in the community.

A committee of Community Stakeholders will be created by the Racial Equity Program Manager. The Community Stakeholder Committee will review applications received for the council in order to provide input as to which applicants will be brought before the Commissioners for consideration of appointment. The Community Stakeholder Committee will review applications for the initial (7) member council and will also review applications for all future additional appointments to open positions.

Removal of Council members shall be recommended by the council and made by the Board of County Commissioners.

#### Section 6. Terms of Council Members



Council members shall serve three-year terms and no more than two consecutive terms. Applications for appointments or reappointments will be reviewed at the end of the first term. If there are no applicants for a vacant position one month prior to expiration of the second term the incumbent may be reappointed for an additional three-year term.

Section 7. Thurston County Commissioners and Department Leadership

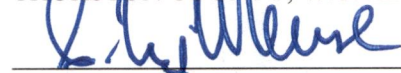
Implicit bias training, also known as unconscious bias training, or other training opportunities will be made available to the County Commission, Board of Health, Elected and Appointed officials. The Harvard Implicit Association Test will also be made available to the County Commission, Board of Health, Elected and Appointed officials. They will be encouraged to participate in these trainings and learning opportunities with the Thurston County Council on Racial Equity and Inclusion members, to continue to build and strengthen relationships within the BIPOC community.

ADOPTED: December 14, 2021


ATTEST:

  
Clerk of the Board

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
THURSTON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

  
TYE MENSER, Chair

 2-1-22  
GARY EDWARDS, Vice-Chair

 2-2-22  
CAROLINA MEJIA, Commissioner

APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
JON TUNHEIM  
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

  
Deputy Prosecuting Attorney